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December 6, 2016

The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Carter,

National defense is the single most important role the federal government serves. As such, I am committed to ensuring our courageous men and women in uniform are equipped with the best and most sophisticated gear, weapons, and machinery to protect our nation, defend our rights and interests, and ensure decisive victory in every potential battlefield.

Then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen stated in 2010 that “the most significant threat to our national security is our debt.” Since that time, Pentagon officials have come before Congress to scare off efforts to reduce unnecessary spending at the Department with nightmare scenarios including reduced combat readiness and cuts to military operations.

The recent findings by the Defense Business Board that nearly a quarter of the Pentagon’s \$580 billion budget is being spent on overhead and operations is, therefore, of both great concern and promise.

The Defense Business Board outlined “a clear path to saving over \$125 billion in the next five years” while avoiding any dire consequences to our national defense. In fact, more resources for the troops and weapons could be achieved by simply reallocating billions of dollars currently being wasted on excessive bureaucracy. This is a win-win scenario for taxpayers and the military.

I understand that providing for the nation’s defense comes at a steep price, but with our national debt approaching \$20 trillion we all need to be focused combatting the new red menace threatening our national security, which is red ink.

In January I will be releasing the annual *Wastebook* report, which includes hundreds of millions of dollars in spending by the Pentagon that I consider frivolous or unnecessary. I hope that we can work together to cut wasteful spending while strengthening our nation’s defenses.

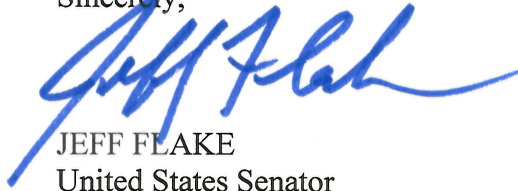
Would you please provide answers to the following questions:

1. What actions, if any, are being taken to address the findings of the Defense Business Board?

2. Following the presentation of the Board's findings, what directives or action items were made to implement the recommended cost savings and are those efforts still underway? What office is overseeing those efforts to ensure compliance? How are savings being calculated?
3. What statutory obstacles may exist that would require legislative fixes from Congress to achieve these savings?
4. Which of the Board's findings and cost savings suggestions do you think should be included in the Department's Fiscal Year 2018 budget request?

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



JEFF FLAKE
United States Senator